

## Isaac Lewis Baker to Andrew Jackson, May 3, 1823, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### ISAAC L. BAKER TO JACKSON.

St. Martinsville, La., May 3, 1823.

. . . . I wrote to you from Natchez that all was safe and so it was as far as a poor set of poor devils could be relied on. The day after my return to the Legislature notice of another caucus for the next day was given. Overton Davezac and myself turned out at once and counted noses. We could not have asked a more favorable result for it appeared out of about sixty members we had at least forty with us. Next morning to our great surprize we found two or three who had always been with us had gone over to the Enemy's camp. We then made a severer scrutiny and found our majority still large. at night when we met things had changed a little, tho we were still strongest by ten or twelve. Mazurau<sup>1</sup> and all your Enemies had been hard at work all day. Many of them spoke the language of a large majority of the members perfectly, Knew better how to opperate on them and did all they could. Davezac in a most able speech opposed the Caucus. He spoke in English and was followed by Mazurau on the other side in French. I rose to answer him, but the instant I got up the opposition started their resolutions round the Tables to get signatures and by dint of persuasion and persecution got some twenty odd signers. In the preamble to the Resolutions in favour of Clay there was a vast deal in your praise with the view solely of deceiving your friends. This trick

<sup>1</sup> The writing is not distinct. Probably Étienne Mazureau is indicated. Maj. Auguste Davezac was with Jackson in the defense of New Orleans in 1815 and continued his loyal

## Library of Congress

friend afterwards. General Overton, whose son John is here mentioned, was one of the old citizens of West Tennessee and a firm friend of Jackson.

got them some support. For two or three days after they made every exertion in their power to get more signatures and at last wonderful to relate they got thirty four. These names are sent forth upon the world as the deliberations of members in caucus. They were no such thing. In the caucus if a vote had been taken in the usual manner mr Clay would not have been nominated. They broke up the meeting of their own accord, and no vote was taken notwithstanding the pompous signatures of their president and secretary. It was all a trick. Overton told me he had long since written a letter to his father (or some other friend in Nashville) giving an account of the whole which I hope was published. Overton and I made some publications in the Orleans Gazette which was sent which placed the transactions in their proper light. In this state it makes no impression. The people know nothing of mr Clay and are not for him. Of twenty seven Americans in the Legislature there are only six or seven who were prevailed on to sign his resolutions. It is hard to say how the French will go but the Americans are decidedly against mr Clay.

Rouffignac (by Duralde's influence) is for Clay, but he is your friend and after clay will be warm for you. Duncan Livingston and Grymes did nothing in your favour.<sup>2</sup> It was not right in them, but as it was they did not choose to act. Davezac is true and the only one of the French members who sticks to you thro good and evil Report, if we except Rost a fine young man from Natchitosh<sup>3</sup> who was not present at the caucus. General Overton ought to be proud of his son John. He is a man of fine genius, as yet a little too wild, but one who will come out exceedingly well in the end. He was as true as steel to you throughout the whole year.

<sup>2</sup> Abner L. Duncan, Edward Livingston, and John R. Grymes; but Rouffignac, Duralde, and Rost have not been identified.

<sup>3</sup> Natchitoches.

## Library of Congress

In this poor state of Louisiana we have so many rascally adventurers who will do any thing for office that they only look to who is strongest to declare themselves. Should Clay and Crawford compromise as you think Crawford cannot get any vote here. I do not believe twenty men can be found in the state favorable to him. He is generally and justly detested. I certainly heard it said often before the Caucus as coming from Governor Carroll<sup>4</sup> that Clay would get the vote of Tennessee. Those who reported it may have done so for electioneering purposes but when I recollected the old John R. Bedford business I was strongly inclined to put faith in it. Should Pennsylvania declare for you you will stand the best chance for if there is a chance of success; the people are so strongly against you that all the west will be yours and most of the south.

4 Governor William Carroll, of Tennessee.

For the part I have taken in this state I have been much assailed in public and private, but it matters not. I glory in such calumny. You have been a warm and useful friend to me and as long as I can serve you you shall not find me seeking shelter under the standard of your Enemies as some others do who have perhaps more regard to their interest than reputation Do me the favour to write to me often. Since I begun this I have been so often interrupted that I have delayed till the post is starting without touching on many points Events justify the view you took of mexican affairs. The republicans have prevailed and Iturbide is a prisoner. The american people may thank you that our government never paid court to the scoundrel. . . . .